THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER TLS

May 1990

Lights, Curtain, Action!

Novices, as well as experienced actors and actresses, made up the cast of this year's 9th grade play. *The Curious Savage* was not about untamed beasts. It was a play about people—their hopes and dreams, their disappointments and failures, their foibles. It was about caring and not caring. If this sounds like a sophisticated script for 14 and 15 year olds, in many ways it was. On the other hand, there was a light-heartedness that made for laughs out loud as well as quiet smiles.

Director Judy Apple let her students choose the play they wanted to perform from seven scripts she had pre-selected. *The Curious Savage* was their overwhelming first choice because of its comic appeal. Little did they know what challenges they were in for! The entire play was conversation, demanding a fast pace, cadence, and split-second timing. "We depended on each other. We helped each other out the whole time," said one actress. This dependency was a bit scary, but it was also cohesive.

The play's setting, The Cloisters, wasn't exactly an insane asylum. It was a private psychiatric facility for people who couldn't quite cope with life's demands or for families who couldn't quite cope with their relatives' eccentricities. Mrs. Apple said, "an early challenge for the lead roles was not to overact their character's mental illness." Her prescription for each patient was to adopt only one obvious mannerism. Practicing in front of a mirror was a popular strategy for polishing the peculiarity.

Hours of extra rehearsal were logged when friends got together after school at each others' houses. Parents fed their children lines at home too, frequently feeding them supper at the same time.

Some people admitted that there were times when they doubted whether all the work was worth it. About a week before the performance, those doubts disappeared and fears of not being ready were allayed. It all fell together, and, yes, "it was definitely worth it." Here are some of the reasons why.

"Most of that awful stage fright disappears once you start talking . . . You feel kind of spaced out at first, and then you aren't even aware of the audience out there . . . The more you get into it, the more relaxing and fun it becomes . . . At the end you know you have accomplished something . . . The applause is wonderful . . . Friends said they laughed a lot and they see us a little differently now . . ."

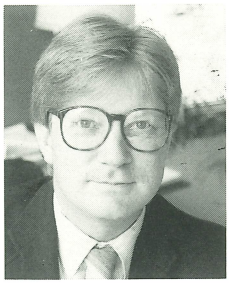


Tea is being served to residents of The Cloisters.

"It was definitely worth it . . . At the end you know you have accomplished something."

From The Headmaster:

by David Lowry



One measure of a school is its level of involvement with the resources of the local community. To move out of the classroom to bring extraordinary programs into the school and expose children to other learning opportunities is a sign of energy and alertness. As you read this issue, make note of the students' visits to the Lexington Philharmonic, the partnership with the Center for Economic Education at UK, and the experiment with tomato seeds from NASA.

TLS students participate in a myriad of excursions throughout their careers here. Just recently such trips have included an upper school science trip to Alltech Biotechnology Center, the fourth grade's day trip to Frankfort as part of their study of Kentucky history, and the Montessori class visit to the main public library. Discovering broader horizons works to make education relevant.

Partners in Education

Economics is kid's stuff. That is the thinking behind a special project from the Kentucky Council on Economic Educaton at UK which involved some first, third, and fifth graders at TLS. A consultant from the College of Education came to school six times as a "guest teacher" to demonstrate how basic economic terms and concepts could be integrated into elementary level classes. First graders' sessions were a part of their math and language curriculums. The children learned about wants and needs with the help of Jack and his bean stalk. *The Piney Woods Peddler* taught them all about money and bartering. Third graders studying nutrition concentrated on the economic issues involved in advertising products for sale. Their classes included a field trip to the Herald Leader with a special stop at the classifieds. The fifth grade social studies students used one of their sessions to make hats. The relative economic merits of assembly line production versus solo workmanship were being evaluated in a hands-on test.

Projects like "Economics is Kid's Stuff" are a good example of the partnerships in our community which support our schools. Some of the funding for efforts of the Kentucky Council on Economic Education at UK comes from the contributions of local business men and women. Many thanks to the TLS parents who were partners. ■



Beth Munari from UK taught economic concepts to our 1st and 3rd graders.

Glasnost Comes to TLS

The Lexington School is delighted to be a part of Ketino Iantbelidze's visit to the USA. Ketino, an 8th grader from Moscow, is the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Verner Stillner and their daughters, Anna '91 and Erica '93.

The 8th grade curriculum at TLS is quite different from what Ketino studies at home, so she "shadows" Anna when they are here. The one exception is algebra. Ketino is able to attend this class, not just as a listener, but as a particpating member.



Anna and Ketino relax for a minute between classes.

Ketino has been studying English since the end of 1st grade. Her skills are being put to good use, and Mrs. Stillner feels that her vocabulary and fluency grow noticeably each day.

When Ketino was asked about how things here in the States are different from what she is used to, several things stood out for her. While she has heard of most foreign foods, there aren't a lot of ethnic restaurants in the Soviet Union, so she hasn't had the opportunity to sample many. The Stillners have taken her to Chinese and Mexican restaurants here in Lexington to broaden her palate. Ketino loves our bright colored clothes. The uniform she wears to school six days a week is a brown dress with a black apron. She is enjoying the availability of tropical fruits like bananas, pineapples, and coconuts. Nintendo was a big sur-

prise. She had never seen anything like that.

Ketino is here until May 28. She will be accompanied home by Mrs. Stillner, Anna, and Erica. In return for the hospitality extended to Ketino by her friends in Lexington, Anna and Erica will be guests of Ketino's family this summer. ■

Math in a Real World

Problems from the UCSMP text



A card is drawn from a deck of 52 playing cards. Find the probability of selecting a queen.



Rita got on a scale and weighed 50 kg. She took her cat in her arms and the scale went up x kg. It then read 54 kg. Write an addition equation relating x, 50, and 54.

Mathematics is not a Spectator Sport

The library isn't the only recipient of new books at TLS. Sometimes departmental textbooks are changed, and students get books that are brand new. Whenever this happens, "new" doesn't usually mean just "not previously used." More likely, it means "hot off the press." Such will be the case in 1990-91 when students in pre-algebra, algebra I and geometry will be learning from texts developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (UCSMP). The new texts update the curriculum to implement the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards committees. Developed over the past seven years, they have been extensively field-tested and evaluated with impressive results.

The content of the course each text is designed to cover has a wider scope than traditional math programs. Even more significant is the fact that the approach to the material and its presentation are very different. For example, lessons are introduced in a way that gets students reading mathematics. The authors firmly believe that "students must learn to read mathematics in order to become able to use it outside of school." The reading section in each chapter provides key concepts, relevant vocabulary, and meaningful examples for classroom discussion.

Topics are placed in real world settings so students know why they are studying them. This reality orientation extends to the approach students take in working out problems. They are expected to use current technology. In fact, the use of scientific calculators is assumed throughout the UCSMP series because virtually all individuals who use mathematics today use calculators.

The series also emphasizes problem-solving. The authors believe that problem-solving is a skill and, as such, it can be learned through practice. Some problem-solvng techniques are deemed so important that at times they (rather than the problems) are the focus of instruction.

Betty Cox, chair of the math department, feels that "the UCSMP is the best series of texts for the junior high school aged child I've ever seen." The instructional format is designed to maximize the acquistion of both skills and concepts, and to develop independent thinking and learning. "The change in the role of the teacher is exciting for all of us," says Mrs. Cox. "Instead of spewing out information and merely explaining the text day after day, we will be clearing up questions and encouraging students to look for answers on their own." After all, mathematics is not a spectator sport.

It's A Fact

- Choice of a foreign language at TLS begins in 4th grade.
- We have an 11,600 volume library.
- Our enrollment is 450 students and there are 52 faculty members. This makes our student-teacher ratio 9:1.

Teacher Profile:
Meet Betty Cox

"An article about myself as a teacher? I find this difficult — extraordinarily difficult — and awkward. You see, I never planned to be a teacher, and once 'there,' I certainly never intended to stay so long."

These words were the first thing that came to Betty's mind when she was asked to share her thoughts about her teaching career. "So long" is almost 30 years now, the last twelve of which have been at TLS. It has been said that some of the best laid plans often go astray. Mrs. Cox would say that equally true is the fact that some of the best outcomes in life aren't planned.



Betty Cox is helping Lauren Coats with an algebra problem.

Betty Cox is a native Lexingtonian who attended Maxwell Elementary School, Morton Junior High, and Henry Clay High School. She was graduated from Centre College with a double major in mathematics and chemistry in 1960. A Haggin Fellowship for graduate work at the University of Kentucky led to a Master of Science degree in mathematics in 1963. At that time, Betty felt that the two most likely choices for her in the world of work were teaching or computer programming. She chose the former because she had enjoyed her teaching experiences as a graduate assistant at UK. Furthermore, she admitted, "I'm not mechanical by nature, and I viewed computers as machines I wanted someone else to deal with."

Georgetown College hired Betty as an assistant professor of mathematics for an annual salary of $5,000. "Amazing, isn't it," she said, "and not only the salary." Small colleges all over the country were hiring people in math with a master's degree that year, maybe because the surge of technological research had drained the supply of Ph.D's. In any case, she felt very lucky, and her years at Georgetown College were good ones.

It was the arrival of one small boy, son Andrew, born in 1973, which changed the course of Betty's teaching career. After 14 years at Georgetown, she resigned. When Andrew was two, "those 12 miles from home to school became just too long." By 1977, the Coxes had two little boys. Teaching math part-time at UK was just enough to keep Betty as busy outside the home as she wanted to be.

The call from Mr. Pritchett, then Headmaster of The Lexington

NANCY *by Jerry Scott*



A word to the wise on Mrs. Cox's classroom door.

School, came in the summer of 1978. He needed someone to teach four classes, two 8th grade and two 9th grade sections. He had heard through the grapevine that she might be available. "I hesitated. I wasn't sure I could 'handle' or teach junior high students. We were already planning to send Andrew to TLS for kindergarten, so there were pluses, and I knew the school's reputation for academic excellence. Finally, I decided to try it, but only the 9th grade classes. This was my beginning, and I'm still here. Why? I suspect that it involves big bright eyes in small bright faces."

Mrs. Cox feels that it is impossible to separate her teaching career at TLS from the development of the school's math curriculum over the past decade. Her memories of this time are of tremendous personal support from Headmasters and Boards who were willing to make the financial commitments necessary to articulate the plans that the math department formulated.

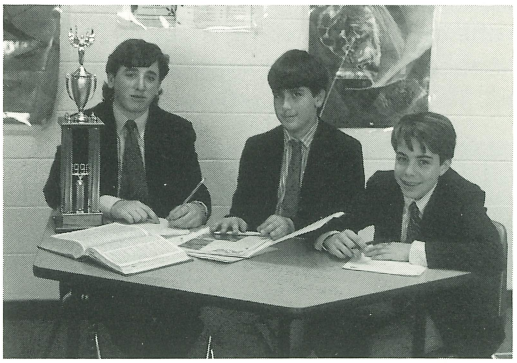
Betty remembers her responsibility for curriculum development in mathematics at TLS as a "shot in the arm." She called everyone she knew in math education, and many she didn't know, to get their thoughts on how to chart the course. She read a lot, too. It became obvious quite early that a primary need in the lower grades was to increase the use of manipulatives. The proposal of a mathematics laboratory/resource center was accepted, and the rest is history. Today TLS has a first class math lab with regularly scheduled classes for children in grades one through six and a full-time director. The lab experiences enrich the textbook curriculum with hands-on activities which make math "real."

Another high point which stands out for Mrs. Cox in her memories of the years gone by is how the Computer Lab came to be. Just as everything in the math department seemed to be settling in nicely, microcomputers came on the scene. "From our math meetings and the professional literature, we in the math department were convinced of their need in our school." Betty approached the Headmaster who asked her to chair a Computer Needs Committee. "You've come a long way, baby," might characterize her 80's attitude toward "those machines." With the help of an outside consultant, the TLS committee drafted a proposal for a computer laboratory which was fully funded by the Board. "The individuals involved didn't take small steps, wouldn't settle for half measures where the excellence of the educational program of the school was concerned." Two years ago, the need for a full-time coordinator for the lab was established and the position funded.

With an independent math lab, an independent computer lab, and a math curriculum developed within all recommended guidelines, Mrs. Cox admits that there are times when she thinks she should, or could, retire. But, she doesn't. Why? Once again, the answer lies in those bright eyes and bright faces. "They go right to the heart," she smiled.

"Besides, I don't know where I could find a bigger challenge than the one I find every day in the classroom. It is my job to teach the concepts and techniques of a specific block of mathematical material to a group of students in a relatively short period of time. These students come to me with varying abilities, vastly different self-images, diverse goals and ambitions, and in different stages of intellectual development. How can one teacher meet all the individual needs, and, at the same time, teach mathematics to the group? I cannot. My goal is simply to try. There are times that I fail, but it is the joy of this particular profession that no failure is conclusive. Tomorrow I get to try again! Now, who can resist that opportunity? So far, I've not been able to." ■

The TLS debate program, now in its sixth year, has claimed the 1st place sweepstakes trophy at the state tournament for the third time. In addition to the team award, individual honors were earned by **Benjamin Self** (second place), **Jon Salomon** (third place) and **John Tackett** (fourth place).The 1989-1990 Junior High School debate resolution, "that juveniles who commit capital crimes should be tried as adults," was a topic particularly well-chosen for the age group. Arguments for and against that resolution were formulated by the debaters after months of research. Their preparation develops skills in organization, analysis, refutation and persuasive speaking. Cross-examination helps students learn to question issues and to think on their feet. ■



Jon Salomon, Benjamin Self, and John Tackett

What's Going On Around Here?

Who goes to work when they play? Why, a philharmonic orchestra, of course. Our preschoolers could have answered this riddle. They learned a lot about orchestras recently, thanks to an educational outreach program of the Lexington Philharmonic called "The Young People's Concerts." Montessori, Pre-K, and kindergarten enjoyed a field trip to the Singletary Center for the Arts for a special performance of dance music for young children. Selections included lively ethnic pieces like the Irish Jig and a German polka, as well as classical favorites from Tchaikovsky, Debussy and Brahms. The children had been prepared for their concert debut by classroom activities which familiarized them with what they could expect to see and hear.

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Budding scientists in Mrs. Groves' second grade are waiting to harvest their first crop of space tomatoes. Their gardening efforts are under the auspices of SEEDS, a NASA-based project designed to offer students a one-of-a-kind, hands-on experiment to study the effects of long-term space exposure on living tissue. After a nearly six year voyage in space, 12.5 million tomato seeds which had been housed on a Long Duration Exposure Facility satellite were rescued by the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia on January 12, 1990. These seeds had been exposed to cosmic radiation, temperature extremes, weightlessness, and the vacuum of space. Students all over the country are planting the space-exposed seeds and a control group of Earth-based seeds, looking for possible mutations to the space tomato plants (changes in fruit size and color, growth rate, and leaf, stem, and stalk shapes and sizes). Results gathered by the students will be forwarded to NASA by June 15 for a final report.



Mrs. Groves is supervising the planting of space tomatoes by her 2nd graders.

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Mrs. Wirtz's first graders got involved in a class project this Spring that was out of this world. They named their unit "Space Central." To launch the effort, students brought in all kinds of things from home to be used as classroom resources. There were books about outer space, favorite toys like rockets and a mission control center, and legos galore. Some aspiring aerospace engineers built unidentified flying objects and the aliens to go with them. Since there wasn't enough classroom space for all the outer space paraphernalia, Space Central soared out into the hall. The project display looked like a miniature set from Star Wars. Dressed in her flight suit, second grade teacher Barbara Groves (a Space Camp alum) made a guest appearance. The astronaut ice cream she brought for the class to sample was quite a taste sensation. "It isn't cold!" was their instantaneous exclamation.

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Emily Cathcart invited her parents and her little brother to the kindergarten's annual Bunny Brunch. The menu, which was fit for lagomorphs as well as humans, included all kinds of healthy foods to nibble and gnaw. Green "lettuce punch" was served with the snacks. The Bunny Brunch is just one way our kindergartners celebrate the rites of spring. Several children have brought baby animals to school to meet their classmates. Eggs were dyed, hidden and hunted one day in April. A walk through the wildflowers was enjoyed at Raven Run.

Applause, Applause

Another Tony award winning performance came from the Math Lab this spring. Mrs. Geddes' third graders starred in *The Mystery of Megan Watt.* Their play was produced and directed by eighth grade drama students.



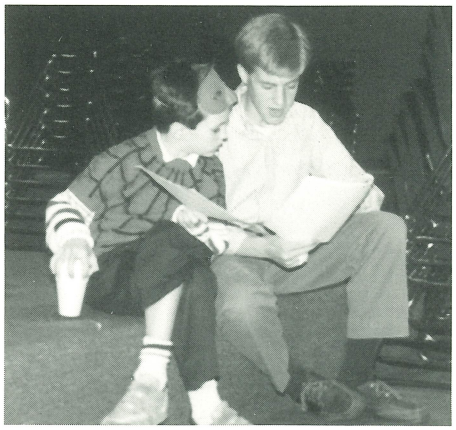
Detectives Alexander Cutadean and Jared McKay

Megan was a computer whiz who suddenly fell down on the job. Sherlock Holmes, Superwoman, Batman, and Robin were among the notable crime stoppers who tried to solve the mystery of her collapse. Was it a slipped "disk?" A "terminal" illness? A "bug?"Or was it all the "chips" she had been eating?

CPU, the computer, finally confessed to having killed Megan Watt with 10,000 volts of electricity (shocking!). Everyone agreed that wasn't very user friendly. The truth, however, was that Megan was playing a joke on her friends. She had programmed CPU's confession. She wasn't really dead, just suffering from a slight case of D.O.S. (Dead-tired Operator Syndrome).

The eighth graders enjoyed producing this play as much as their younger friends enjoyed acting in it. Drama teacher Donna Adams is justifiably proud of the way her class handled their assignment. "Their initiative was impressive," she said.

The eighth graders began work behind the scenes about a month before meeting the cast. Their prep work involved rewriting the script to include four extra parts, designing and building the set, planning the costumes, lighting, and sound effects. Ninety percent of the staging decisions were made by directors Jay Shropshire and Gene Slusher. They also wrote lesson plans for the days when the two classes met together for practice. Each upperclassman served as a mentor for a third grade partner. The twosomes rehearsed lines and worked on interpretation. When one eighth grader was asked what she learned from coaching a younger child, she replied, "Now I know why it's so important to do what you're asked to do." Famous last words! ■



Eighth grader Trevor Wilkes helps William Wood rehearse.

Teacher Talk

By Sara Meekins

For the past two years, TLS has participated in Leadership Education, a program directed by the Kentucky Education Foundation. It is financially underwritten by local businesses and schools who furnish substitutes so that their teachers may participate. Mary Beers and Mark Scarr represented TLS last year, and I have joined 34 other Lexington teachers this year to learn more about community issues, problems, and resources.

After a two-day retreat/orientation in September, our group has been meeting for one full day a month to focus on topics like the history of Lexington, human needs and services, the arts, economic development, and government. Each day involves both speakers and tours of sites pertinent to that day's topic.

In its third year, the Leadership Education program has developed into a lively exchange of information and ideas between the speakers and the participants. Business men and women feel that teachers need to know more about our community, but they also feel that they have much to learn about problems in education. This year has been particularly exciting as Kentuckians watched and wondered about changes that would take place in education as a result of last summer's Supreme Court decision declaring the system of public education in the Commonwealth unconstitutional. Although The Lexington School is not directly affected by these changes, there is a lot we can learn from the debate, and much we must know about the curriculum our students come from or will be entering when they leave us.

As we listen, examine, and exchange ideas, it is possible that one of the greatest benefits we TLS teachers receive from this program is a realization of the many problems we do not have! ■

In The Tradition



TLS Photo Archives

1961 - 1962, Grade 1. It must have been Friday!
l to r: Sky With, Patterson Boyce, Ken Sears, Ann Bakaus, Bayre Cassell.

Dear TLS Family,

Due to the soaring costs of mailing, we have decided to send only one copy of each issue of the TLS Newsletter to any address for which we have more than one name listed. If you are an alum with a new address, please let us know.

We'd love some news from alumni for our summer issue. Could you take a few minutes to drop us a line about what's new with you? Or give us a call at 278-0501.

R.S.V.P. by June 1 to assure inclusion.

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Save These Dates

May 15	New Parents Evening
May 17	9th Grade Show
June 2	Graduation
June 4-28	Camp Curiosity
June 9	TLS Golf Classic — Dinner And Calcutta
June 11	TLS Golf Classic — Lunch and Tournament

The Lexington School admits students of any race, religion, color, sex, national or ethnic origin.